DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 070 009 CG 007 637

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TITLE A Role Change Strategy: Decentralized Counseling.
PUB DATE 72
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Consultation Programs; Counseling; Counseling Instructional Programs; *Counselor Functions; Counselor Performance; *Counselor Role; *Counselor Training; Decentralization; Training

ABSTRACT

The debate over new counseling roles rages as some counselors are already adopting them. This paper describes alternative counseling-consulting interventions possible with teachers. It suggests a strategy for speeding the process of role change and encouraging counselor-teacher interaction. The strategy is that of decentralizing counseling offices into close proximity to teacher offices. The advantages and disadvantages are described. Among the issues central to success of this strategy is that of training. The difficulties involved in having counselors acquire new skills is discussed. A solution offered to the retraining of counselors already in the field and renewal of skills for others is the vast number of institutes being offered by growth centers around the country. The hope is expressed that in the future counselors will pick and choose skill training from the varied sources discussed in the paper. (Author/BW)

ED 070009

CG 007 637

A Role Change Strategy: Decentralized Counseling

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Recently, the traditional role of the counselor has been challenged on a number of fronts. Ivey and Weinstein (1970) have challenged counselors to gain skills so that they might become "human development specialists" and work with larger numbers of clients through psychological education programs. Sprinthall (1972) has countered with a suggestion that guidance people work with youngsters within the theoretical framework of developmental psychology. Both seem to have in common, Sprinthall's (1972) suggestion that counselors "take the leadership in becoming teachers for personal growth" (p. 355).

Many others in recent counseling literature, have suggested several new roles for counselors (Caldwell, 1970; Cook, 1971; Dinkmeyer, 1967; Ehrle, 1972; Faust, 1968; Fredrickson, Bingham, and Benson, 1972; Hurst and Ivey, 1971; Ivey and Morrill, 1970; Ivey and Weinstein, 1970; Lewis, 1970; Lundquist and Chamley, 1971; McGehearty, 1968; Matheny, 1971; Mosher and Sprinthall, 1971; Munson, 1971; Pancrazio, 1971; Schmuck and Runkel, 1971; Sprinthall, 1972; Stanford, 1972; Thoresen, 1969). It is not the intent of this writer to become embroiled in the debate among these alternative roles. While it is legitimate to carry on discussions of this nature, it is becoming clearer that as background for these discussions several counseling centers are implementing these new approaches (Program Summaries and Abstracts: 1972 APGA Convention).

Morrill and Oetting (1970) have attempted to survey four-

year college counseling centers whose activities move counselors away from their isolated offices and into contact with faculty, students and administration. The changes, they feel, "lead to maximal growth and development" (p. 50) and have been termed "outreach" programs.

"Of 397 (63% of those polled) responding centers:

217 consult with academic faculty...

165 consult with student advising programs...

105 do research consultation with departments

74 publish materials for faculty, students, etc....

70 consult on improving academic tests...

36 run student-faculty interaction programs...

17 improve teacher effectiveness..." (from Table I, p. 51).

Many other "outreach" activities are listed, but the significance of the above listing is that these are all activities that involve a good deal of interaction with faculty. The assumption inherent in the rest of this paper is that "outreach" with faculty is a significant activity in the counseling scene today as well as just a suggested activity.

Stanford (1972) points out that previous authors who are suggesting more involvement with faculty do "...not provide the counselor with many concrete suggestions for carrying out his new role" (p. 585). A strategy for accomplishing a role modification that includes working as a "human development specialist" and having more of an effect on the total environment of a campus is presented herein as a partial remedy to Stanford's complaint.

The major factors in this strategy include decentralization of counseling services, the hiring and administrative support of

counselors with special skills and the readiness of these counselors to take on active consulting roles with various teaching and non-teaching divisions of an educational institution.

CONSULTING WITH FACULTY

Having to choose where one makes his interventions and with whom is a difficult task at best. Cook (1971) puts this problem best when he says,

> You have to choose some battleground which is at once significant enough to make a potential difference yet circumscribed enough so the chances of successfully changing the situation are good (p. 484).

This writer chooses a faculty-centered approach to counseling with any number of possible types of interventions available depending on consultee readiness and counselor skills. A description of some of the types of interventions possible with faculty are described below.

The counselor may choose to become a consultant to the teacher on the basis of his ability to integrate more consciously and methodically the aspects of curriculum labeled content and those labeled affect (Ivey and Weinstein, 1970). The counselor, teacher and student can also begin to exploit the guidance potential of the combined curriculum as Munson (1971) suggests.

This approach implies knowledge of curriculum development and implementation. Some of the techniques used to implement such a curriculum (using groups of students, relaxation training,

micro labs, fantasy, etc.) are unfamiliar and uncomfortable for the average teacher to apply. Thus, the counselor should have the skills to be able to team up with the teacher tc implement this curriculum in the classroom. Such teaming often leads to a sharing of skills and the opportunity for mutual respect. In addition, the counselor becomes more visable to students and learns something about the environment students spend much of their day in. In addition, the counselor becomes more central to the major goal of the institution, the "teaching and learning" process.

A second potential intervention type may find the counselor again playing a consultant's role to the teacher by helping the teacher help specific students or groups of students with their difficulties. The counselor may do this in a number of ways simultaneously. He may encourage the teacher to offer a helping relationship to the students and then consult with the teacher on progress and specific next steps (Dinkmeyer, 1967). He may, as Thoresen (1969) states, suggest behavioral science techniques such as "social modeling," "systematic desensitization," and "contingency management" techniques to help solve specific problems. The effort is geared towards solving the problems within the context (Caldwell, 1970) they appear and reserving the counselor's office for other appropriate interventions.

A third potential intervention type in working together with faculty is the "counselor-consultant" described by Lundquist and Chamley (1971). In addition to the interventions mentioned above, they suggest counseling with faculty, improving facultys' interpersonal relationships as a group, assessment of facultys'

interaction process, especially in meetings, and providing in-service training for faculty in any of the possible areas of child development, counseling theory, and learning theory. In addition, other writers have suggested organizational development skills training (Schmuck and Runkel, 1971) and training in providing facilitative core dimensions (Carkhuff, 1969).

This is surely not a complete list of possible interventions with faculty. A perusal of the literature on various roles and counseling interventions would reveal many more suggestions to the reader. As Morrill and Oetting's (1970) survey of outreach programs suggests, many of these ideas are being tried out and evaluated (Lewis, 1970; Levy, 1969; Mosher and Sprinthall, 1971; Fredrickson, Bingham, and Benson, 1972; Stanford, 1972).

It seems appropriate at this time to find ways of enhancing and routinizing such counseling roles. Decentralizing counseling services is suggested as a way for counseling services to initiate and support new counselor-teacher relationships.

DECENTRALIZED COUNSELING

A striking metaphor is suggested in an introduction to "Guidance and Instruction: A Rapprochement" by Harold Munson. He says,

> ...we have created an entity that has become <u>divorced from the center</u> of the educative process - classroom learning....We have tended to isolate guidance, particularly the counseling function. In the process we have created a <u>wall</u> between the classroom teacher and the school counselor (p. 335, emphasis is mine).

Guidance and counseling has been "divorced from the center," "isolated," and has built a "wall" between it and the classroom teacher. Given the role descriptions above, it seems logical that the field of counseling can once more be central to the teaching-learning process and the walls can begin to come down. Decentralization can help speed this process.

Decentralization can have a number of meanings. Caldwell (1970) describes a program where counselors are free to spend 50% of their time away from their offices in varied student contact settings. Program Numbers 510 and 533 of the 1972 APGA Convention (Program Summaries and Abstracts; 1972 Convention) describe two possible approaches. The first indicates a "50-50 ratio" between working with an academic division and working in the counseling center. Work space is available to them in the division and this approach is called "dispersed" counseling. In the latter program a totally decentralized approach is indicated with counselors' offices located in academic buildings as well as the Commons.

In this paper, decentralization is defined as setting up counseling offices in the same area as faculty office space. This space as in the above descriptions may be used from fifty per cent of the time to full-time occupancy. The amount of time spent in these settings would have to depend on the particular institution involved. For the high school counselor, decentralization may mean permenantly scattering their offices about the building to be closer to where teachers are assigned spaces. One great advantage for the high school counselor would lie in getting away from administrators. This is a less drastic step

than the movement out of the school and into the community centers that is suggested by Zerface and Cox (1971). This move would make them visable and available to teachers and students who feel counselors are aligned with administration now.

The small four-year and community college campus adapts well to decentralization where more personal contact is the norm. The stiff formality of interpersonal relations of the larger colleges and universities may make it difficult to move into a fully decentralized setting on a full-time basis.

There are many advantages to decentralizing counseling services. It gives counselors the "vehicle for regular contact with the teacher" (p. 297) that Dinkmeyer (1967) calls for. It also encourages "day-to-day encounters with individual teachers" (p. 351) that Munson deems necessary to achieve their new centralness in the teaching-learning process.

More specifically, the counselor can gain insight into the world of the faculty and into one of the most important student environments while at school, the classroom. The counselor who uses behavioral science techniques is in a better position to know whether his environmental manipulations and advice to others he consults will make any sense. Counselors applying social-psychologically based theory and techniques may model desirable behaviors they wish to see in others. The opportunity to reinforce occasional random behavior deemed desirable in individuals is also possible with close faculty contact.

Schmuck and Runkel (1971) cite advantages of a system for integrating organizational specialists into school districts.

Their system is very similar to decentralization in that only part of the specialist's role is a consulting role and the consulting team is spread throughout the district. Another similarity of these organizational specialists to the decentralized counselor is that they "do not administer, direct, supervise, or install" (p. 5). With decentralization, counselors no longer give the appearance of administrators with all the onus of being evaluators. Reports from organizational specialists in two school districts indicate that their services are used a great deal with some success.

The visability and accessability gained by decentralization and the non-threatening lack of power of counselors can free up faculty to begin to use counselors in tentative ways. These first steps test the water so to speak. If the counselor can demonstrate his variety of skills in this contact, he will prove visably that he is a much needed and useful member of the institution. The counselor's bag should include a variety of specific interventions available to him. The counselor must not advertise more than he has to give. More generally, the counselor must be congruent and be able to offer facilitative conditions (Carkhuff, 1969) to faculty and students under difficult circumstances. He is out in the open to be seen by all. The interventions may be short and fleeting at first, and those around him are often offering lower facilitative conditions which may tend to bring his down (Carkhuff and Berenson, 1967).

Disadvantages have been hinted at above, and it would seem appropriate to disclose several more that have variable appropriateness across settings. The counselor may begin to act more like

faculty or at least look like he is faculty. This may put him at a disadvantage with some students. His availability for individual counseling will certainly decrease. A solution to availability may be to provide office hours that are kept open for drop-ins, similar to faculty office hours in colleges. Access to centralized records may be difficult unless some computerized read-out system is available. Secretarial and phone answering problems may be difficult. One must be very careful to explain to faculty why a private office is important when they may be doubled and tripled up. Taking up residence in an undesirable space may be the answer.

Some difficulties are also inherent in being isolated from one's professional colleagues. There may be difficulty in sharing the day-to-day occurrences that make for close relationships among colleagues. It is difficult to share common problems and solutions. This loss of contact from professional counterparts can cause feelings of lack of support and isolation, especially under circumstances that involve a tremendous drain on one's skills and minimum pay-off at first.

The effectiveness of the counselor must be enhanced by providing him with new skills and refurbishing old skills. Several solutions suggest themselves. The counseling staff should meet regularly to share experiences and to plan directions in common. Organizational development consultants may be utilized to help with ongoing re-evaluation of goals and appraisal of how well the counselors are using their skills in their own meetings. The counselors may also wish to use each other as resources or team up on certain projects. Lastly, a staff development program

could be set up by the group to meet training and retraining needs of the counselors.

TRAINING AND RETRAINING FOR CONSULTING

Pancrazio (1971) indicates that for a counselor to succeed in roles similar to those described in this paper, he needs education and experience that involve him in the classroom and enable him to observe teachers meaningfully, and be able to write and teach others to write behavioral objectives. He also suggests teaching the core facilitative dimensions. Given the other roles discussed here, it also seems appropriate to include sensitivity training, group dynamics training, a knowledge of learning theory applications, third party intervention skills, and a multitude of other skills beyond individual and group counseling.

While it is difficult or impossible for any one counselor education program to offer all of these skills, it is possible to teach some of these concrete useable consulting skills. In addition, the program should teach students how to teach each other so that when in the field, the norm can become one of sharing skills. One such program was recently described by Hedlund (1971) and a further description will not be attempted here.

A solution to the retraining of counselors already in the field and renewal of skills for others is the vast number of institutes being offered by growth centers around the country. (National Training Laboratories, Esalen, The Gestalt Training Center in Cleveland, Rationale-Emotive Training, Aureon, G.R.O.W.,

The New England Center, The Center for the Whole Person, Parent/Teacher Effectiveness Training, just to name a few) With the decentralization of the National APGA conventions, another opportunity for intensive skill building workshops at low cost is becoming feasible.

Brammer and Springer (1971) in a recent article describe a Washington State certification plan that calls for a counselor-consultant who is in fact a master consultant. This person can provide meaningful supervision and training for counselors in in-service training programs. His schedule should allow him to attend many of the skill building sessions and then share the skills.

With a great number of skills and options for getting them available, the counselor can choose to obtain skills that are appropriate for his working environment. The counselor should be encouraged to do this by allowing him the money and time to go to skills training sessions once or twice a year, or as he can justify them on the basis of what he is attempting to do at the time.

The potential for counselors to gain and renew skills is great. Even Morrill and Hurst's (1971) indictment of the many training programs that offer only "limited range of skills" is not disheartening in light of this potential. Certainly, if counselors are to be decentralized consultants, the constant demands on their skills will force them to promote these training options for themselves.

While the demands of being a decentralized counselor are great, the rewards are also great. One major consideration

should be, can counseling services expect continued support in light of the economic difficulties we face today. This is especially a problem in light of the invisability of most counseling services and the performance of duties that are not particularly valued by the majority of the institution's members. In addition, the counselor will be sharing his skills with a much broader client group including faculty and many more students. He would have the opportunity to really have the impact on the environment that it will take to make the student personnel point of view more universal. It is an opportune time to open new dimensions of service to a broadened clientele for a very small additional cost.

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